

Message Text

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1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR'S PRINCIPAL IMPRESSIONS FROM FIVE-DAY TRIP TO FOREST REGION AND FARANAH WERE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES AND HOW HEAVILY US IS BEING COUNTED ON TO PARTICIPATE IN MIFERGUI-NIMBA IRON ORE PROJECT AND TO PRODUCE EARLY RESULTS ON GUINEAN AGRICULTURAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. BOTH PROJECTS REPRESENT CRUCIAL TESTS OF US INTEREST AND WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO GUINEA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND US PERFORMANCE IN BOTH CAN HAVE IMPORTANT BEARING ON FUTURE GOG ATTITUDES. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR MADE EXTREMELY INTERESTING FIVE-DAY TRIP THROUGH FOREST REGION OF GUINEA MAY 17-21, VISITING MT. NIMBA LOLA, N'ZEREKORE, MACENTA, SEREDOU, GUECKEDOU, KISSIDOU, AND RETURNING VIA FARANAH, MAMOU AND KINDIA. TRIP WAS MADE JOINTLY WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR LEWIN WHO KNEW MANY OF GOVERNORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS CONTACTED. WARMTH OF RECEPTION ACCORDED BOTH AMBASSADORS WAS NOTABLE, AND ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS SPECIAL SATISFACTION WAS EXPRESSED BY LOCAL OFFICIALS OVER REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR LEWIN, MORALE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENTHUSIASM OF LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE NOTABLY HIGHER THAN WHEN HE MADE SIMILAR TRIP TWO YEARS AGO. LEWIN ATTRIBUTES THIS TO NEW ATMOSPHERE PRODUCED BY RECONCILIATION WITH SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST, RELAXED SECURITY CONDITIONS INSIDE GUINEA, AND IMPROVED DOMESTIC CONSUMER GOODS SUPPLY AND BEGINNINGS OF REVIVED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

3. GENERAL CONDITIONS IN FOREST REGION APPEARED GOOD: REGION LITTLE TOUCHED BY DROUGHT; FOOD PRODUCTION IN EXCESS OF LOCAL NEEDS, RICE BEING SENT TO NEEDY SAVANNAH AREAS; FAIR NUMBERS OF CATTLE, CHICKEN, GOATS, SHEEP AND PIGS IN EVIDENCE; VILLAGES SIMPLE BUT CLEAN AND WELL-TENDED, PEOPLE APPARENTLY HEALTHY AND WELL FED; MARKETS REASONABLY STOCKED WITH SMALL CONSUMER GOODS; BORDER MOVEMENT APPARENTLY FREE FOR THOSE LIVING IN FRONTIER AREAS; THREE TO FOUR THOUSAND GUINEANS SAID TO HAVE RETURNED TO AREA FROM IVORY COAST AND LIBERIA SINCE JULY 1977 AMNESTY; OVERALL FOREST REGION POPULATION INCREASING ALSO THROUGH INFLUX FROM POORER AREAS OF GUINEA; ROAD CONDITIONS WIDELY VARIED, MACENTA-BAOULEMA BEING IMPASSABLE WITHOUT FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE, BUT REST OF ROAD TO GUECKEDOU NEWLY SCRAPED AND FROM GUECKEDOU TO FARANAH AND ONWARD METTLED; VERY FEW CARS ON ROAD (THREE PER HOUR) UNTIL GUECKEDOU.

4. PRINCIPAL IMPRESSIONS FROM THE TRIP RELATE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

(A) INTENSIVE MIFERGUI-NIMBA PROSPECTING HAS ESTABLISHED AT LEAST 300,000,000 TONS OF VERY HIGH-GRADE IRON ORE (60-69 PERCENT HEMATITE CONTENT); VAST ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES ARE AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON NIMBA AND EVEN MORE IN SIMANDOU RANGE NORTH OF N'ZEREKORE. CONVEYER BELT DELIVERY ENVISIONED FROM NIMBA TO PLANNED RAILROAD AND THENCE 15 KILOMETERS TO LAMCO RAILHEAD IN LIBERIA APPEARED SIMPLE AND DIRECT. KAISER STUDY ALMOST COMPLETED, AND REPORT WILL BE READY FOR DELIVERY IN JULY; CRUCIAL MOMENT OF DECISION WILL COME AT THAT TIME. US STEEL HAS MOST OF THE BASIC DATA ALREADY; ITS PARTICIPATION IS ASSUMED BY ALL CONCERNED AND IS REGARDED AS A SINE QUA NON FOR THE MIFERGUI-NIMBA PROJECT. BOTH MIFERGUI-NIMBA AND GUINEAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EMPHASIZED THE VITAL ROLE OF US STEEL IN PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL TECHNICAL DIRECTION FOR THE PROJECT. THEY ARE COUNTING ON US STEEL'S STRENGTH AND MANAGERIAL KNOW-HOW TO GET THIS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT UNDERTAKING OFF THE GROUND.

(B) SUBSTANTIAL LUMBERING POSSIBILITIES EXIST THROUGHOUT THE FOREST REGION BUT ARE LARGELY UNDEVELOPED. EXTENSIVE STANDS OF TREES ARE AVAILABLE FOR CUTTING, AND GROWING CONDITIONS ARE FAVORABLE FOR SCIENTIFICALLY PLANTED AND HARVESTED TREE FARMS. THERE ARE FEW SAW

MILLS IN THE AREA; ONE PARTICLE BOARD PLANT IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT SEREDOU AND SHOULD BE IN OPERATION BY OCTOBER 1978.

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(C) FARANAH FACULTY OF AGRONOMY IS A KEY INSTITUTION FOR THE TRAINING OF AGRICULTURAL SPECIALISTS, AND USAID PROJECT FOR CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHING FACILITIES THERE AND A DEMONSTRATION FARM AT TINDO WILL SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FACULTY'S CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE VITAL AGRICULTURAL SECTOR. THE PROJECT IS WELL-CONCEIVED, BUILDING SITES HAVE BEEN SELECTED, AND REQUIREMENT NOW IS TO GET ON WITH CONSTRUCTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS URGENT IN THE EYES OF FACULTY DEAN AND LOCAL OFFICIALS. DURING FARANAH VISIT AMBASSADOR WAS CALLED TO SEE PRESIDENT TOURE'S BROTHER AMARA TOURE WHO IS FEDERAL SECRETARY, HIGHEST ELECTIVE OFFICIAL IN REGION. TOURE CAME RIGHT TO THE POINT, EXPRESSING DEEP INTEREST IN THE US PROJECT BUT EXASPERATION OVER LACK OF PROGRESS IN BRINGING IT INTO BEING. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT US ARCHITECTS HAD ARRIVED AND WERE CURRENTLY IN FARANAH WITH HIM. TOURE WAS NOT IMPRESSED AND SAID HE HAD SEEN PEOPLE COMING AND GOING ON THAT PROJECT FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS; DISCUSSIONS AND STUDIES HAD DRAGGED OUT OVER AN UNCONSCIONABLE LENGTH OF TIME AND GUINEANS EXPECTED US AT LAST TO PRODUCE AND PRODUCE QUICKLY. TOURE PUT THIS IN RATHER CAUSTIC TERMS, AND GOVERNOR OF FARANAH REGION, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT, UNDERSCORED THE GOVERNMENT'S

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DISSATISFACTION OVER PROTRACTED DELAYS IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION. LATTER SAID WITH A HARD SMILE THAT NOW THAT AMBASSADOR HAD BEEN ON THE SITE AND SEEN HIMSELF THE CONTRIBUTION THE AID PROJECT WOULD MAKE, THE GUINEANS EXPECTED TO SEE RESULTS. LATER, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE ARCHITECTS, THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF AGRONOMY MADE SIMILAR COMMENT, SAYING HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO CHANGE A LINE ON ANY OF THE PLANS, AS HE DID NOT WANT TO PROVIDE EXCUSE FOR ANY FURTHER DELAY IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

5. COMMENT: THE IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED BY GUINEAN AUTHORITIES TO THE MIFERGUI-NIMBA IRON ORE PROJECT AND THE USAID AGRICULTURAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT HAS BEEN MADE AMPLY CLEAR. BOTH REPRESENT CRUCIAL TESTS OF US INTEREST AND WILLINGNESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO GUINEA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND US PERFORMANCE IN BOTH AREAS CAN HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING ON GOG ATTITUDES TOWARD THE US. WE APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT MIFERGUI-NIMBA DECISION IS IN HANDS OF US STEEL AND NOT USG, BUT WE HOPE US STEEL IS AWARE NOT ONLY OF THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF THE PROJECT BUT ALSO THE SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL OVERTONES INVOLVED.

6. WITH REGARD TO THE AID AGRICULTURAL PROJECT, WE AGAIN UNDERSCORE THE NEED TO TELESCOPE THE FINAL STEPS TOWARD PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SO THAT CONSTRUCTION CAN BEGIN WELL BEFORE THE CURRENT "TARGET DATE" OF JUNE 1979. AMBASSADOR HAS JUST RECEIVED OFFICIAL NOTE FROM GUINEAN AID PROJECT CO-DIRECTOR, PROPOSING TIMETABLE CALLING FOR BEGINNING OF CONSTRUCTION IN FEBRUARY 1979. AS PIO/C WAS SUBMITTED AUGUST 15, 1977, IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN TO GOG OR ANYONE ELSE WHY THIS CANNOT BE DONE.
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